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University of Montana

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MEDIA RELEASE

June 10, 1987

UM'S PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM REACCREDITED

MISSOULA --

The University of Montana Physical Therapy Program is on a roll. In late April the state Board of Regents voted to retain the eight-year-old program, and in early May the program easily passed its reaccreditation review.

The program received eight-year reaccreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Education of the American Physical Therapy Association. Reaccreditation followed an intensive on-campus review in October by a three-member team representing the Alexandria, Va., commission.

Program Director Janet Hulme said her faculty's biggest challenge was proving "how a program with so few faculty and so few financial resources can maintain quality and stability over a long period of time."

She says the program is the smallest of its kind in the nation. With a 1986-87 budget of \$92,000, it has three full-time and more than 10 part-time or visiting faculty members. Thirty-two students are enrolled in the professional program and 130 in the pre-professional program.

A three-day review of the program convinced the team of the program's excellence. It reported that UM's physical therapy

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faculty is well qualified, dedicated and highly motivated and exposes students to the latest concepts in the field. Other findings included a "tireless, creative program director"; a "bright, motivated, talented student body" in demand; and "support by the physical therapy community for the academic program."

A recurrent theme in the team's report was inadequate funding for supplies and equipment. "The lack of money available in the state, university, school and program has a definite negative impact on the development and operation of the program," the team concluded, saying the faculty is forced to raise too much money.

"Because of the dedication and untiring efforts of the (faculty), many obstacles are overcome," the team found. "Extramural resources are obtained through the innovation of the faculty and assistance from the physical therapy community."

The team, which also cited as a weakness the program's small number of faculty members, recommended stronger cardiovascular and pulmonary instruction and improved clinical courses.

By October UM's administration must indicate to the commission its intention to provide adequate funding for the program if the faculty isn't able to raise additional funding.

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Carol Susan Woodruff
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